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THE SCAR

After those nights of terror and of blood

How still it is here in the starlit vale !

How the cigale tells its endless tale

And the owl cries in the wood !

Ah, excellent was my love, and good to see :

None was his peer in all the countryside :

And many a maid would fain have been his bride—

But he had chosen me !

He came back here—these crosses mark the place

Where many many a brave man lies !—’t was such a night

And the stars showed me by their flickering light

The scar across his face.

And as we stood beneath the silent skies

I kissed with passionate pride that seal of duty :

Better than all his comeliness, his beauty

That seemèd to mine eyes.

And then I told him all—the cruel whole !

That night’s invasion, terrors and alarms,

Of how they tore me from my mother’s arms . . .

The wound left in my soul.

The burning blush, the tears which scorched and scarred

I thought that he would strive to kiss away :

I thought that he in love’s own words would say

My fairness was not marred.

A cry of horror—anger—then of shame !

His arms grew limp, about me, he recoiled.

Ah, then I knew that I in truth was spoiled

And ne’er could be the same.

And as I stood upon this field of blood

Alone—how strange and silent seemèd the vale !

How the cigale told its endless tale

And the owl cried in the wood !

ELSIE BYRDE.

Nervi, Italy.